## TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE Transcriber's Office FLOOR DEBATE

March 27, 2002 LB 1309

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Pedersen. Senator Wehrbein, you are recognized to speak.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Madam President and members of the body, this is a little bit awkward because I am not intimately familiar with this, as Senator Pedersen is. I am going to oppose it. don't know that I have strong feelings, but I'm a little reluctant to move \$269,000 around at this point. We did take an additional million dollars from the Corrections, and I know some of you have a sense of some frustration on the cost of Corrections, but I remind you a lot of these were decisions based on a few years ago. I was going...that's what I was going to say on Senator Landis' comments that I couldn't remember what I was going to talk about. But we do need to change some things in our system in...and Senator Brashear could speak eloquently on that but...because I know there's some things in the works for next year. We are on track to build another prison in five years, which is not...it's not in my eyesight at all. We do need to do some things in probation and parole. In fact, our committee has added probation officers for that very reason, trying to do some things. But the fact of the matter is our sentencing is fairly strict. And so all of these things add up to the fact that we, in ourselves, have brought on many of these additional expenses, and we're paying the piper. believe, about ten years ago when Senator Warner had the idea that when we had additional sentencing or stronger sentencing or more strict sentencing, that there would be a cost going on the A bill. That went clear to the Supreme Court and it was said we could not do that. We cannot bind future legislators. But the fact of the matter is, the way we have done it, we have bound future legislators for these kinds of expenses. I'm not talking directly to Senator Pedersen's amendment, I realize that. But I will say at this stage of the game, I...some of you called it a game, I don't call this a game today, this is very serious business, I am reluctant to move this amount of money at this point, reducing community-based programs to zero. Pedersen may well be right. I can't answer that yes or no, but because I'm a little bit off guard here and not aware, I would prefer not to do this amendment at this point for the \$269,000. And it is definitely something that should be pursued next year. I have a commitment on many areas of the Corrections budgets and